FAMINE RELIEF CODE

Bombay Presidency

1927

PART I

Previous to Scarcity or Famine

CHAPTER I.—STANDING PREPARATIONS AGAINST SCARCITY OR FAMINE

1. *General.*—The preparations for dealing with scarcity or famine which it is necessary to maintain from year to year are—

(i) an efficient system of intelligence,

(ii) an effective programme of scarcity or famine relief works,

(iii) reserves of establishment and tools.

(i) *System of Intelligence*

2. *System of intelligence.*—Agricultural and vital statistics are prepared by the village and taluka officers and are submitted through the Collector of the district to the Director of Agriculture and the Director of Public Health, respectively. Detailed rules for the preparation of these statistics have been laid down in the Manual of Revenue Accounts and elsewhere; it will suffice here to summarize the duties of the several officers.

3. *Duties of village accountant.*—The village accountant, besides making the prescribed inspection of lands and crops and filling in the statistical returns, is required at once to report to the Circle Inspector the existence or prospect of any distress or failure of crops, fodder or water-supply, the prevalence of cattle disease, any unusual migration from or into his village and other matters affecting the state of the people of his village.

4. *Duties of Circle Inspector.*—The Circle Inspector is required—

(*a*) to inspect every village in his circle repeatedly during the year and make himself acquainted with the state of the crops and condition of the people;

(*b*) to watch the season, so as to detect very early signs of coming distress and to be ready to report, whenever called on, the condition of his circle;

(*c*) if unfavourable information of the season is received, to visit at once the village concerned and report the result of personal observation and inquiry to the Mamlatdar;

(*d*) to submit to the Mamlatdar a fortnightly diary noting, among other things, the condition of the chief crops and the estimate of outturn up-to-date, and the condition of cattle and public health;

(*e*) to check the returns of agricultural and vital statistics prepared by the village accountant;

(*f*) to collate the statistics received from the village accountants and prepare returns for the whole taluka.

5. *Duties of Mamlatdar or Mahalkari.*—The Mamlatdar or Mahalkari is required—

(*a*) to exercise a general supervision over the work of the village accountants and Circle Inspectors;

(*b*) to submit the fortnightly diaries of the Circle Inspectors with his remarks to the Sub-Divisional Officer;

(*c*) to submit monthly returns of births and deaths for the taluka to the Collector and the Director of Public Health and the Assistant Director of Public Health in whose circle his taluka is situated;

(*d*) to deal with the reports received from the village accountants and Circle Inspectors. and on the receipt of any unfavourable reports at once to proceed to the tract represented as affected and communicate the result of his observation to the Sub-Divisional Officer;

(*e*) to submit weekly returns of the rainfall to the Sub-Divisional Officer and the Collector, with remarks as to the nature of the season and the state of the crops, noting specially whether the rain has promoted or retarded any agricultural operation, and reporting any adverse circumstance or sign of distress which may be indicated in the diaries of the Circle Inspectors.

6. *Duties of Sub-Divisional Officer.*—The Sub-Divisional Officer is required—

(*a*) to test the accuracy of the statistics compiled in his sub-division;

(*b*) to examine the fortnightly diaries of the Circle Inspectors and generally to exercise a close supervision over their work;

(*c*) to move actively about his charge during the touring season and keep himself informed of the condition and prospects of the sub-division;

(*d*) on receipt of any report that a serious failure of crops is imminent or probable in any portion of his charge, to proceed forthwith to the spot and report to the Collector the results of his observations.

7. *Duties of Collector.*—The Collector of the district is required—

(*a*) to keep himself at all times informed of the agricultural condition of every part of his district and to see that the rules for the collection of agricultural and vital statistics are complied with;

(*b*) to submit direct to Government by telegram a weekly rainfall and season report for his district, giving information as to the amount of rainfall, the progress of agricultural operations, the condition of the standing crops, any marked fluctuation in prices of food-grains and fodder, any serious damage caused to crops by insects, floods or other natural calamities, the condition of agricultural stock and the supply of water and fodder;

(*c*) to obtain reliable information about centres where labour is required in his own as well as in any other district and arrange to publish such information widely in his district at any time when scarcity is threatening;

(*d*) to organize as far as possible in his district a permanent charitable famine relief fund to be devoted to the gratuitous relief of those who need it, to the supply of clothing and to the provision of fodder for cattle in times of scarcity or famine;

(*e*) to make proposals for the relief of distress affecting men and cattle when, in his opinion, the necessity arises in framing such proposals care must be taken to make timely recommendations for the suspension or remission of land revenue.

8. *Duties of Director of Agriculture.*—The Director of Agriculture is required—

(*a*) to supervise generally the system of collecting information in normal times regarding prices, rainfall, state of the crops and agricultural stock and other circumstances from which the approach of scarcity and agricultural distress can be detected; it is the duty of the Director, should he detect imperfections in the system, to submit suggestions for its improvement to Government;

(*b*) to ascertain by periodical inspection that the system is, in normal times, being efficiently and properly worked in each district, and to report any defects in its working to the Collector of the district;

Correction Slip to the Famine Relief Code, 1927.

No. 7.

Page 3, section 10—

Substitute the following for the existing section 10 :—

"*Scarcity works and famine Relief Works.*

(*a*) Scarcity works shall consist of—

(1) Local fund and municipal works.

(2) Expansion of public works.

(3) Village works.

The Village Improvement Associations and Panchayats will be the main agency to spend Government Grants for village works, the Public Works Department and the District Local Boards supplying the technical advice. The village works should be undertaken in the initial stage and the District Local Board works and the large Public Works Department works started as soon as the distress deepens.

(*b*) Famine Relief Works shall consist of large central works employing more than 3,000 workers each."

Pages 4 and 5, sections 13 and 14—

Substitute the following for the existing sections 13 and 14 :—

"*Periods within which programmes should be prepared.*

The Village Panchayats and Improvement Associations should prepare a programme of village works by 1st January. No elaborate plans and estimates are required for village works and rough estimates in respect of these works should be prepared by the Village Improvement Associations and Panchayats on the basis of a rough type design furnished by the Public Works Department. They should be scrutinized by the Collector in consultation with the District Local Board and Public Works Department authorities and be approved by him. The Collector in consultation with the Public Works Department and District Local Board or Municipality should decide whether any of the works should appropriately be included in the programmes of these bodies. A copy of list so revised and approved shall then be sent to the Village Panchayat or Improvement Association as the case may be for record. Any changes in the programme of works in subsequent years shall be similarly scrutinized and approved by 15th January.

One programme of Public Works Department and District Local Board (and municipal) works should be prepared and revised annually to serve the purposes of both scarcity and famine. Such programme should be prepared in Form 1 by the Presidents of the District Local Boards and of municipalities and by the Executive Engineers and should be approved by the Collector not later than 15th January after he has satisfied himself that the works included in the programmes are of real utility in the district and will give adequate employment to those who are in need of it. The approval of the programme should be communicated by the Collector to the Commissioner, on the 15th January of each year. In the case of large Public Works Department central works the following directions shall be observed in preparing the programme:—

(*a*) all current projects suitable for work should be included in the programme;

(*b*) the programme shall show clearly for each work whether plans and estimates have been sanctioned and the work is in progress, or plans and estimates have been sanctioned but the work is not yet commenced, or plans and estimates have been prepared but are not yet sanctioned, or the plans and estimates have not yet been prepared; whether the work is or is not ready to be opened at once and is a useful work, the estimated cost at ordinary rates of the whole work and of the portion available for relief, and the number of units who can be employed;

(*c*) in the case of works for which plans and estimates have not been prepared, the approximate figures shall be entered and steps shall be taken as early as possible to survey the works, prepare plans and estimates, obtain sanction to them and enter in the programme the correct figures.

[*Price*—Pies 6 *or* 1*d*.]

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The Superintending Engineer should scrutinize the district programmes, and forward them to the Collector with such amendments and additions as he may think necessary. The Collector shall report to the Commissioner on the 15th January of each year that the combined programme of scarcity and famine works has been prepared and approved by him."

Page 15, section 61—

Substitute the following for the existing section 61 :—

"Village works may be conducted either by the Village Panchayats, village improvement and rural development associations or wherever convenient or necessary by the Revenue Department under the Collector or the Public Works Department."

The following should be inserted as section 61-A :—

When managed by the Village Panchayats or Village Improvement and Rural Development Associations, village works shall be conducted in accordance with the rules contained in part (iv) of this chapter which are applicable to all scarcity work and the following special rules :—

(1) A manager shall be appointed for each work by the Panchayat or the Village Improvement or Rural Development Association as the case may be. The manager may be given by the Panchayat or the Association as the case may be a suitable pay up to Rs. 50 per mensem subject to the approval of the Collector and shall be subject to the supervision and control of the Village Panchayat or the Village Improvement or Rural Development Association as the case may be.

(2) The provisions of sub-sections (*2*), (*3*), (*4*) and (*5*) of section 63 shall apply to the conduct of village works by the Panchayats, or Village Improvement or Rural Development Associations."

Page 16, section 63—

Substitute the following for the existing clause (3) of section 63 :—

"When a village work is started the Sub-divisional Officer or Mamlatdar should remain on the work for a day or two to instruct the manager in his duties and see the work fairly started. After the work is started it should be carefully inspected not less often than once a week by one or other of the above officers. At every work a place indicated by a conspicuous flat shall be fixed for the admission of applicants and shall be visited twice a day including rest-days by the manager. He should classify the applicants and draft them to the work. When a person arrives on a work in search of employment and cannot be employed if the attendance is full he should be put on the dole register of the nearest village with a certificate from the sub-overseer or manager in charge of the work till such time as work can be provided for him on that or any other work within a reasonable distance."

Page 16, section 64—

Substitute the following for the existing section 64 :—

"*Work to be given on piece-work system to gangs.*

The work shall be given out in piece-work system to gangs, which shall usually consist of 50 workers in charge of a ganger, who shall be selected from the workers themselves subject to the following rules :—

(*a*) The piece-worker shall employ on his work as many labourers coming for work as in the opinion of the Executive Engineer or his Assistant can be usefully employed thereon.

(*b*) The piece-worker shall pay wages to such labourers according to the rates laid down by the Executive Engineer or his Assistant, subject to a maximum of 0-4-0, 0-3-0 and 0-2-0 per day for a man, woman or child (i.e., a person between the ages of 10 and 14 years) respectively and a minimum of 0-2-6 for a man or a woman and of 0-1-6 for a child between the ages of 10 and 14 years provided such labourers turn out a full day's work to the satisfaction of the said officers.

(*c*) The piece-worker shall pay the wages due to the labourers regularly every week, failing which Government shall be at liberty to make payments of such wages to the labourers and recover the same from the amount due by Government to the piece-workers.

(*d*) The piece-worker shall stop the work whenever called upon to do so by the Executive Engineer or his Assistant either on account of cessation of scarcity conditions or because it is desired to carry out the work by other agency and shall not be entitled to any compensation on account of advances made by him to labourers, tools purchased by him or for any other reasons :

Provided that the piece-worker shall be paid for the materials, if any, collected by him for use on work and lying on the site on the date his work is closed, at the tendered rates, or in the absence of tendered rates, at the Scheduled rates or such rates as may be fixed by the Executive Engineer."

Page 17, sections 73 and 74—

Substitute the following for the existing section 73 :—

"*Water supply.*

Before a work is started provision of water supply shall be made for the workers on all scarcity works, and the subordinate or manager in charge of any such work shall be responsible for seeing that the supply is adequate and is properly protected from contamination, and for treating it periodically with potassium permanganate or chlorate of lime as directed by the Civil Surgeon."

Substitute the following for the existing section 74 :—

"*Sanitary and medical arrangements.*

Before a work is started the subordinate or manager in charge shall be responsible for seeing that the site of the work and its surroundings are kept in a proper sanitary condition. Arrangements shall be made either to dig trenches as latrines for the workers or to mark off with flags sites to leeward of, and not less than 200 yards from the camp, where the people may be allowed to ease themselves. In all large construction works carried out through the agency of contractors on which not less than 500 persons are employed or are likely to be employed on it at one time and at one site (i.e., within a five miles area) for a continuous period of not less than six months the following rules regarding medical and sanitary arrangements will be followed :—

(1) The contractor shall provide an adequate supply of pure and wholesome water for the use of labourers.

This provision shall be at the rate of not less than 10 gallons per head ; no provision need be made where there is a suitable nalla, river or well within ¼ mile of the camp.

(2) The contractor shall construct trench or semi-permanent latrines for the use of the labourers. Such latrines shall be on the scale of not less than 5 per 100 persons in the camp ; separate latrines shall be provided for men and women. The labourers may at their option be allowed to use either the trench system or the latrine system.

(3) The contractor shall build a sufficient number of huts on a suitable plot of land, for the use of the labourers according to the following specification :—

(*a*) Huts of bomboos and grass may be constructed.

(*b*) A good site shall be selected. High ground removed from jungle but well provided with trees, shall be chosen wherever it is available. The neighbourhood of rank jungle, grass or weeds should be particularly avoided ; camps should not be established close to large cuttings or earth work.

(*c*) The lines of hut shall have open spaces of at least 10 yards between rows. When a good natural site cannot be procured the drainage should be particularly attended to.

(*d*) There should be no overcrowding. Floor space at the rate of 30 square feet per head shall be provided. Care should be taken to see that the huts are kept clean and in good order.

(*e*) The contractor must find his own land and if he wants Government land he should apply for it and pay assessment for it.

(4) The contractor shall construct a sufficient number of bathing places every unit of 20 persons being provided with a separate bathing place. Such bathing places should be suitably screened and separate places provided for men and women.

Washing places should also be provided for the purpose of washing clothes. Every unit of 30 persons shall have at least one washing place.

(5) The contractor shall make efficient arrangements for draining away the sullage water as well as water from the bathing and washing places, and shall dispose of this waste water in such a way as not to cause nuisance.

(6) The contractor shall engage a medical officer with a travelling dispensary for a camp containing 500 or more persons if there is no Government or other private dispensary situated within 5 miles from the camp.

(7) The contractor shall provide the necessary staff for effecting the satisfactory conservancy and cleanliness of the camp to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department officers. At least one sweeper per 200 persons should be engaged.

(8) The Assistant Director of Public Health shall be consulted before opening a labour camp and his instructions on matters such as water supply, sanitary conveniences, camp site, accommodation and food supply shall be followed by the contractor.

The foregoing rules shall, as far as may be, also apply when any large construction works are carried out departmentally."

The following should be *inserted* as section 74-A :—

"*Residence on works.*

Residence on works shall ordinarily be left to the option of the persons relieved. Where materials such as brushwood, thorns, stones, grass, etc., are procurable in the vicinity, relief workers who choose to reside on the works shall be encouraged to provide their own shelters, and hutting accommodation shall be provided at the expense of Government if there is a reasonable demand for it."

(*c*) to prepare for publication in the *Bombay Government Gazette* a monthly summary of the rainfall and season reports referred to in section 7 (*b*);

(*d*) to prepare for publication in the *Bombay Government Gazette* a fortnightly return of retail prices of food-grains;

(*e*) to compile and collate in his annual season and crop report the agricultural statistics derived from the returns received from the local revenue officers under the above system;

(*f*) to maintain a statement up-to-date of the agricultural circumstances of each tract of the Presidency, prepared from the information periodically collected in his own office as well as from settlement reports and other sources and of the measures required to improve the agricultural efficiency thereof;

(*g*) to maintain up-to-date, revising and re-editing it after each period of twenty years, the Statistical Atlas of the Presidency, showing the areas which are liable to famine, the causes which make them so liable, their accessibility or otherwise for relief purposes, the economic condition of the population of such areas, and a rough forecast of the maximum number of persons within each such area likely to require employment on relief works in time of famine;

(*h*) to prepare for inclusion in the Statistical Atlas and to revise decennially a schedule showing the normal retail shop rates in even pounds per rupee for each quarter of such period as Government consider suitable in each case (excluding years of abnormal scarcity) of the principal food-grains of the district at the head-quarters of each district.

(ii) *Programmes of Scarcity and Famine Relief Works*

9. *Programmes of Scarcity and Relief Works.*—The maintenance of programmes of *scarcity* and relief works which can be used at a moment's notice is essential as a preparation against *scarcity* or *famine*; all works entered in the programmes (*except advance programmes of current repairs to roads or tanks*) should be located and measured up in advance; and complete estimates of the probable cost and of the number of labourers which each work is able to employ must be ready.

10. *Scarcity works and famine relief works.*—(*a*) Scarcity works shall consist of—

(1) Local fund and municipal works.

(2) Expansion of public works.

(3) Village works.

(*b*) Famine Relief Works shall consist of large central works employing more than 3,000 workers each.

11. (*i*) Local Boards and Municipalities should be asked to undertake current repair works and new works, such as development and drainage schemes and other improvements required within their jurisdictions, on which persons requiring work can be employed.

(*ii*) *Selection of works for scarcity works' programmes and famine relief works' programmes.*—Programmes should include as far as possible works of real economic value to the locality in which they are situated, and which are adapted to local needs. The Collector should advise District Local Boards and Municipal Bodies to keep in readiness programmes of repairs to existing works and of new works on which labour can usefully be employed in times of scarcity and famine. Programmes of expansion of public works should consist mainly of repairs and improvements to existing roads by—

(*a*) widening and raising the road berms;

(*b*) collecting and breaking metal at convenient places alongside the roads, care being taken not to collect more metal in any one spot than is likely to be required within the succeeding five years; and spreading and consolidating metal after the rains have commenced;